



29/01/21

Dear Parent or Carer,

I hope this update finds you well on the first month of the year and as the current lockdown draws to a close. Although it has been a challenging few weeks, as we have come to expect during these times, we have continued to be buoyed by the way students and staff are meeting the challenges of remote learning, providing for Critical Worker and Vulnerable students on site, and supporting students pastorally to make the best they can of the current situation. As staff, we even have a multi-school running challenge over this weekend, which will no doubt give some added encouragement to us all to maintain New Year promises around fitness and exercise!

This update focusses on exams arrangements, remote learning and wellbeing.

### 1) Exams Arrangements

The government consultation on arrangements for the **replacement of GCSE, BTEC and A Level exams this summer** closes today. We anticipate the results of the consultation and final decision from the government and the exams regulator, OFQUAL, to be published to us later in February. As soon as we have more information we will let you know, as we are acutely aware of how uncertain the current situation is for students, parents and carers, and for ourselves as teachers.

### 2) Remote Learning

Thank you to all of you who continue to provide feedback on our remote learning. The way in which young people and colleagues are adapting to learning remotely has been and continues to be truly inspiring. Here are a few important points to note:

- i. Ben Cotton, Assistant Principal, is overseeing **feedback from students and parents and carers** about remote learning. We'd encourage parents and carers to give your thoughts via the google form here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdBfZLa04Y4KHULStzSg1VBuIU7IJWeE2m8WRBqCxaHdPU7ag/viiewform>

Ben will also be meeting students virtually over the coming weeks to gain as much perspective as possible on what works best. And, of course, as teachers, we are continually sharing best practice around remote learning.

- ii. With Google Classrooms and remote learning up and running so well we are seeing high levels of engagement across year groups. Lots of student work is now being submitted (or 'turned in') via Google Classrooms. Please be reminded that **teachers are continuing to assess student learning** whilst we are working remotely. Just as in 'normal' opening, this is based on two strands: assessed pieces of work such as practice exam questions, essays, tests and the like; and the teacher's own professional judgement. The latter includes participation in class, non-assessed work such as class notes, homework and student effort (behaviour for learning).
- iii. As usual, alongside classwork on Google Classrooms, teachers where appropriate **are setting homework on ClassCharts**. However, we are acutely aware of the new pressures working remotely is bringing. With that in mind, we have asked teachers to carefully consider the amount and type of

homework that they set. If you have any feedback about homework, please do let the class teacher and Head of Faculty know directly so that we know early of any problems.

- iv. Please encourage your young person not to forget the importance of **reading for pleasure** at this time. It is so enjoyable in its own right, as well as being beneficial for learning. Sophie Killock has written today to parents and carers in Y7 and Y8 with some specific support being put in place for reading for pleasure, but equally please join us in encouraging reading whatever your young person's age. A good starting point is always the KEVICC Canon reading list on our website.

3) **'Wellbeing Wednesdays' 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> February**

We all recognise the added pressure working remotely brings. For students, we know that the challenges of live lessons, and working from Google Classrooms on set tasks are very different from normal school.

For teachers, planning and assessing work is considerably less straightforward than usual, and we are also not used to being sedentary for much of the day. Our non-teaching staff as well are working very intensively as part of the provision for Critical Worker and Vulnerable students on site.

Because of this, we'd like to build in **an extra mid-week opportunity for students and staff to switch off** from remote learning and to take time for their own wellbeing. We'd encourage all our young people and staff to take the extra opportunity to get fresh air, exercise, or simply relax and switch off.

To facilitate this, **on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February and Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February College will finish at 1.40pm.**

Critical Worker and Vulnerable students on site will go home at this time - LA provided transport will arrive at 1.40pm to collect them. Students on public buses should check timetables to get an earlier service or make other arrangements. All students working remotely should note there will be no period 5 lesson on Wednesday.

Your feedback on this would be much appreciated by email to me at [asalt@kingedwardvi.devon.sch.uk](mailto:asalt@kingedwardvi.devon.sch.uk). We will review how this has worked and confirm arrangements for after half term before we break up on 12 February.

Lastly, it was encouraging this week to get early clarification from the DfE on arrangements for the half term holiday period in February. Schools will not offer Critical Worker and Vulnerable student provision during this time, but we will of course continue to collect information on any positive cases, notify individuals and contact trace as necessary over this time in order to help keep our community safe. Having adequate notice of this comes as a welcome novelty for Headteachers across the country!

With best wishes for the weekend,



Alan Salt  
Principal